



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
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Minutes 01-15-09



January 15, 2009
5:30-7:00PM

Present: Cindy Bouvier, John Scheft, Kathy Hirsch, Andrea Razi, Ethel Doyle, Colleen Leger, Christine Sharkey, Natasha Thorne, Charles Skidmore, Christine Shultz, Bobby Bongiorno, Annie LaCourt, Bryan Gallagher

Attendees: 13

I. Reflections on Last Meeting: Drug Recognition Program

Our interest is in training school officials to recognize and evaluate students suspected of using, so that they may feel confident in their assessment. Rich Kendal offered a largely educational program targeted at students and parents. Coalition members interested in exploring other options, although some question how a training would improve the current system, which includes assessment and referrals to CASPAR for further evaluation. Everyone agreed that having a symptom checklist/screening tool to help facilitate and standardize the assessment process might be helpful. John Scheft recommended two police officers to contact for a drug recognition training. Colleen will follow up with John about these trainers.

II. Upcoming Events

The SADD club is sponsoring its 26th annual event on Wednesday, 1/21/09. Cara Filler, a motivational speaker on peer pressure and traffic safety, will be presenting to two assemblies at the high school, and to one assembly at the middle school. Coalition members are invited to attend a reception at 8:30 AM with Cara Filler and members of SADD. AYHSC will be funding the event.

The Community Forum will be held on Thursday, March 19th from 7-9pm. Please save the date, as it is important to have as many Coalition members as possible participating at the Forum.

Upcoming Training: "Why Scare Tactics Don't Work: Understanding Evidence-based Strategies Addressing Youth Risk Factors". This training will be offered by the Southeast Center for Healthy Communities on May 6, 2009. Several members expressed interest in attending this training. PLEASE CONTACT me (Colleen Leger at 781-316-3179 or cleger@town.arlington.ma.us) if you would like to register for this training.

III. Updates from Working Groups

CMCA: There will be a training for the Liquor Licensing Board (Board of Selectmen) and members of the Police Department (recently appointed agents of the LLB) on Sunday, 1/25/09. This training will cover local alcohol policies and enforcement procedures, as well as liquor license applications and violation processes. Bryan will work with Colleen and Christine to schedule alcohol compliance checks over the next month or so. He also plans to implement Cops in Shops within the next couple months. There were suggestions that Arlington PD communicate with neighboring communities around alcohol compliance checks. Students are reporting buying alcohol in Somerville and Medford.

There is concern that youth of age, and those with fake IDs, are buying alcohol in large quantities to give to their underage friends. Cops in Shops might deter this.

John Scheft reports that there are efforts at the state-level to develop stipulations creating the right of arrest of individuals who fail to ID themselves once they have been cited for possession of marijuana. Increasing the fine for possession is not an option.

Youth Council: Applications are now available for students in the guidance office. Announcements are scheduled to run twice a week for 3 weeks, and all students with a Noviance account received an email inviting them to apply. Application process ends 1/30/09. Kathy, Andrea and Colleen will review the applications the following week.

YRBS/Community Assessment: This year's 6th grade class has not received the human growth and development class that covers sexuality, which has some school officials concerned about the appropriateness of the YRBS sexuality questions for this class. Coalition members expressed greater concern for the fact the 6th graders have not received this important instruction. It is possible to modify the survey, so that we can still gather data on substance use (the four core measures) but not include questions on sexual intercourse. Colleen met with members of the Board of Youth Services, and they have expressed interest in supporting our efforts to conduct a community assessment, as well as other initiatives that align with their mission.

High Risk Youth: It may be appropriate to collaborate with the Board of Youth Services on this endeavor. Rough Action plan: convene a working group meeting; define the population and the associated risk indicators; identify existing resources within the community that currently serve these populations, and assess what needs are not being met; Recommend interventions where indicated. Charlie identified older adolescent and young adult substance abusers/distributors as one high risk group in need of attention.

Community Forum: Working group has decided to keep the format similar to last year's. Exploring "Pressures for parents and teens" as this year's topic. Efforts to promote the event should focus more heavily on middle school parents and youth (as well as parents of incoming 6th graders) than in past years. The objective of this year's forum is to build capacity and mobilize the community into action. Suggestions for small group discussions: role-playing different scenarios. We are in the process of finding a keynote speaker. Suggestions: professional athlete.

IV. Strengthening our Strategic Plan

We were not able to cover this agenda item due to lack of time. We will include this in our next coalition meeting.

V. Member Feedback

1. Build Capacity: conduct outreach to grow Coalition membership
2. Change Location: Whittemore Robbins House
3. Food: Panera Bread (sandwiches and salads); fruit
4. Continue to send out Agenda in advance of meeting
5. Identify action items at each meeting for members to feel more productive between meetings
6. Set aside time during each meeting for members to address pressing issues or concerns, or to talk about recent events that impact our work in the community
7. Members appreciate hearing from one another and learning about what other Coalition members are doing.

If I have omitted anything from the list of suggestions, or if anyone would like to provide additional feedback, please feel free to contact me (781-316-3179 or cleger@town.arlington.ma.us)